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PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-first session on the evaluation of the development issues and policies programme: Economic Commission for Africa

SUMMARY

At its thirty-first session the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) considered the report of the Secretary-General on the in-depth evaluation of the development issues and policies programme: Economic Commission for Africa (E/AC.51/1991/3). The Committee adopted recommendations on (i) programming of activities in relation to subregional priorities; (ii) resource requirements of the MULPOCs; (iii) funding of PADIS.

In accordance with the decision taken by CPC at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations following each in-depth evaluation, the present report is a review of actions taken during the past three years which are related to the recommendations of the Committee.

Taking into account new developments, the report introduces for consideration by the Committee recommendations aimed at enhancing cost-effectiveness for the short-term operations of MULPOCs.

* E/AC.51/1994/1.

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	4
I. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE MULTINATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONAL CENTRES	7 - 42	5
A. Legislative actions and restructuring	7 - 18	5
1. Strengthening of MULPOCs (1990-1992)	7 - 10	5
2. Reorganization of advisory services	11 - 12	6
3. Restructuring of the substantive divisions of the Economic Commission for Africa	13 - 15	7
4. Decentralization of the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors	16	8
5. Regional economic integration	17 - 18	8
B. Determinants of the programme of work of MULPOCs	19 - 29	9
1. The programming process	19 - 21	9
2. Linking national and subregional levels	22 - 24	10
3. Rationalization of intergovernmental organizations	25 - 27	11
4. Monitoring of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s	28 - 29	12
C. Resources available to MULPOCs	30 - 42	13
1. Level of staffing	30	13
2. Expertise of MULPOC staff	31 - 35	14
3. Non-staff resources of MULPOCs	36 - 38	15
4. Resources for projects	39 - 42	15
II. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATION ON THE PAN-AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM	43 - 49	16
A. UNDP assessment in 1992	43	16
B. Work programme preparation	44 - 45	18

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
	C. Resources available to information systems development and PADIS	46 - 49	18
III.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	50 - 54	20
	A. Multinational Programming and Operational Centres	50 - 52	20
	B. Pan-African Development Information System	53	22
	C. Specialized intergovernmental review	54	22

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report has been prepared in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) at its twenty-second session, in 1982, that triennial reviews should be conducted to determine the extent to which its recommendations on in-depth evaluations had been implemented. 1/

2. The Committee for Programme and Coordination, at its thirty-first session, considered the report of the Secretary-General on the in-depth evaluation of the development issues and policies programme: Economic Commission for Africa (E/AC.51/1991/3). The focus of the in-depth evaluation was on (a) the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs), (b) the Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS) and (c) the effect of extrabudgetary resources on priorities among ECA programmes.

3. At its thirty-first session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination adopted the following recommendations: 2/

(a) "The Secretary-General should identify those activities relating to economic cooperation and integration that could be reoriented and focused wholly on subregional objectives and priorities, as set out by economic subregional grouping, and ... should submit appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session;

(b) "In reviewing the resource requirements of the MULPOCs at its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly should fully reflect the recommendations of the Evaluation Report (E/AC.51/1991/3), as well as other relevant reports adopted by it. ... In the light of this review, the requisite resources should be provided to the MULPOCs for the efficient fulfilment of their mandate relating to subregional economic cooperation and integration in Africa;

(c) "The Committee further recommended that the General Assembly invite the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide adequate resources to support the economic integration process and to allow PADIS to become fully operational, taking into account the relevant decisions of the Governing Council."

4. The present report is a review of actions taken during the past three years which are related to those recommendations of CPC. As was the case with the past triennial reviews, the present report is based on a review of documentation, information submitted by the programme concerned and, where possible, interviews.

5. Since the in-depth evaluation has been completed, several major new developments have affected the environment in which this programme is implemented. Among these are the signing of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, on 3 June 1991 in Abuja, Nigeria; 3/ the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; 4/ and the process of decentralization of the United Nations initiated by the Secretary-

General in 1992, which includes enhancing the contribution of the regional commission. 5/

6. The present report, taking into account the current situation, introduces for consideration by CPC a set of recommendations with a view to enhancing cost-effectiveness for the short-term operations of MULPOCs.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE MULTINATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONAL CENTRES

A. Legislative actions and restructuring

1. Strengthening of MULPOCs (1990-1992)

7. The ECA Conference of Ministers, in resolution 702 (XXV) of 19 May 1990, approved new terms of reference of MULPOCs which redefined the role of the Centres in clearer terms and also provided a comprehensive policy and operational framework to enable them to carry out their tasks. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1990/76 of 27 July 1990, urged the General Assembly to provide the Centres with additional resources. By the same resolution, the Council changed the lines of reporting of the Centres; they were now to report directly to the ECA Conference of Ministers through the committees of intergovernmental experts that will be responsible for supervising the activities of the Centres at the subregional level. The Secretary-General, in his subsequent report on the subject to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, 6/ noted that the programme linkages between the Centres and intergovernmental organizations, by which the programmes of the former would be derived from those of the latter and approved and supervised directly by the ECA Conference of Ministers, would represent a significant innovation in programme design, harmonization and execution. The Secretary-General proposed that 18 additional posts - 8 Professional and 10 General Service - be established in the Centres.

8. The report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the subject 7/ states that the Advisory Committee intended to review the Secretary-General's proposal for additional posts for MULPOCs in the context of its review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. In that connection, the Committee requested a report which clearly indicated the specific programme of work of MULPOCs and its relationship to the programme of work of ECA. The requested report was also to provide a breakdown of the various funding sources for all the posts. Furthermore, a clear indication was to be provided on the status of MULPOCs. The ACABQ observed that, if they were an integral part of the ECA secretariat, it would seem appropriate that they should report to the ECA Conference of Ministers through the Executive Secretary of ECA rather than through the committees of intergovernmental experts. The rationale for that arrangement was to be explained in the report of the Secretary-General to ACABQ.

9. Subsequently, in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, the Secretary-General proposed the establishment of five new Professional posts in order to strengthen the capacity of MULPOCs in the promotion of subregional

economic cooperation and integration in Africa. The Secretary-General also stated that possibilities of redeployment of the remaining posts to MULPOCs (3 Professional and 10 General Service) would be explored. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/185 of 20 December 1991 on questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, accepted the Secretary-General's proposals and requested him to provide MULPOCs with the remaining posts and to report thereon at its forty-seventh session. At the forty-seventh session, the Secretary-General stated that, because of the ongoing restructuring exercise of the offices away from Headquarters, no report had been made to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session containing "final proposals regarding further strengthening of the MULPOCs through additional staff resources and modifications of the existing administrative and reporting arrangements". 8/

10. In its report on the proposed programme budget for the 1994-1995 biennium, ACABQ reiterated its request (see para. 8 above) for clarifications on the following: 9/

> "the role of the secretariat of ECA and MULPOCs in programme formulation and implementation; every effort should be made to avoid duplication of activities and to clarify further the role of the Executive Secretary of the Commission and the committees of intergovernmental experts of the MULPOCs in supervising the MULPOCs."

2. Reorganization of advisory services

11. At the ECA Conference of Ministers in May 1991, the secretariat of the Commission presented a reorganization and reorientation of its advisory services to member countries. A Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group (ECA-MRAG) was established under the direct supervision of the Executive Secretary. The Group was charged with strengthening the links between research and operational activities of the Economic Commission for Africa. The Group's composition varies depending on the problem being studied. The annual programme of ECA-MRAG is developed after initial consultations with Member States, intergovernmental organizations and other United Nations agencies at annual meetings of MULPOCs. That programme is further refined and expanded by continued contacts with IGOs and Governments. 10/

12. Of 39 missions implemented in 1992 by ECA-MRAG, about one third were to individual countries, about 40 per cent to the regional/subregional IGOs and about 25 per cent to international forums. For example, multidisciplinary teams were dispatched to the Eastern and Southern African Preferential Trade Area (PTA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) secretariats to (a) review their treaties in relation to the main provisions of the Abuja Treaty, and (b) assess training needs for enhancing the capacity of the secretariats of the two communities. 11/ The ECA Conference of Ministers, in resolution 756 (XXVIII) of 4 May 1993, noted with appreciation the wide range of priority areas in which the Group had rendered technical advisory services to African Governments and their intergovernmental organizations since its inception, and called upon Member States to make increasing use of the available

resources and expertise of MRAG in the search for coherent and lasting solutions to their socio-economic development problems.

3. Restructuring of the substantive divisions of the Economic Commission for Africa

13. In November 1991, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa established a Task Force to review and appraise the policy orientation, programmes and management capacity of ECA. The Task Force identified in its report four desired impacts that ECA must seek to have, three of which dealt with strengthening regional and subregional cooperation. The Task Force considered that clear and concise tasks should be set for MULPOCs so that the ECA member States could judge their impact on African development at the subregional level. The Task Force stressed that, as much as possible, ECA activities should be carried out through or in cooperation with subregional or regional institutions so as to strengthen their integrating role. 12/ The ECA Conference of Ministers, in its resolution 726 (XXVII) of 22 April 1992, requested the Executive Secretary to undertake, as might become necessary, reforms in the structure of the secretariat so as to achieve full consistency with the new orientations recommended.

14. The Committee for Programme and Coordination, at its thirty-second session in October 1992, considered the revised text of programme 30 (ECA) of the medium-term plan, which incorporated the new orientations; the Committee welcomed the streamlined subprogramme structure, and noted "the vital role played by the MULPOCs of ECA in each African subregion". 13/

15. At the end of 1992, the Executive Secretary of ECA summarized new arrangements under way for the streamlining and restructuring of the Commission, as follows: 14/

(a) The restructuring of the Commission substantive divisions provided for greater concentration of activities;

(b) The signing of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community posed a new set of leadership challenges for the Commission in its programmes for regional cooperation and integration in Africa. The MULPOCs assumed critical importance in that regard playing their part as operational outreaches of the Commission, and assisting Member States and their subregional intergovernmental organizations in the identification, design and promotion of the financing and execution of integration projects;

(c) The responsibilities of the new division, entitled Trade, Economic Cooperation and Integration, of which MULPOCs were part, were defined in connection with the main goal of the Commission to assist Member States in implementing the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community; the Division was to address the production, trade, monetary and financial, and institutional aspects of regional economic cooperation and integration in a global manner. In that regard, the Division was to develop the strategies and policy instruments necessary for regional economic cooperation and integration,

and to deliver those services to Member States at the subregional level through MULPOCs.

4. Decentralization of the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors

16. In 1992, the Secretary-General initiated the reorganization of United Nations Secretariat structures in the economic and social fields. In May 1993, following consultations within the framework of the interdepartmental Task Force on Decentralization, the executive secretaries of the regional commissions "agreed that advisory services, which were included in section 12 of the programme budget, lent themselves especially well to early measures of decentralization". The conclusions are reflected in the 1994-1995 programme budget (see para. 34 below). "It was recognized that [these] conclusions constituted a set of initial measures" (E/1993/85, paras. 189-192). The steps initiated by the Secretary-General to coordinate and unify the United Nations presence at the country level "without compromising the distinctiveness of individual programmes, will be pursued in the light of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/199" [of 22 December 1992]. 15/

5. Regional economic integration

17. In May 1993, the ECA Conference of Ministers called upon Member States and the heads of ECA, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) to take the necessary measures to facilitate the rationalization and integration of subregional economic institutions. The Conference stated that the promotion and strengthening of economic integration in Africa depend on the progress made first at the subregional level and subsequently at the regional level. 16/

18. Each of the MULPOCs interact with several intergovernmental organizations. 17/ The ECA Conference of Ministers, in its resolution 745 (XXVIII) of 4 May 1993, requested the Centres to provide rational and effective assistance to the intergovernmental organizations in the preparation of policies for coordinating, harmonizing and rationalizing activities with a view to establishing a single community in their respective subregions. The Conference also invited African intergovernmental organizations to cooperate with MULPOCs in implementing their subregional economic integration activities and requested the intergovernmental organizations, in that regard, to communicate in good time, the areas of assistance and activity in which the backstopping of the MULPOCs is required so that they can integrate such activities in their work programmes and order of priorities. The Conference of Ministers further requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to submit to it a programme for the strengthening and rationalization of MULPOCs which takes into account all the contributing factors. The Conference renewed the appeal which it made in 1991 to the General Assembly for the financing of additional posts in MULPOCs and for the provision of additional financial resources; it also appealed to Member States to continue supporting the Centres by making contributions and by facilitating the secondment of their staff to the Centres.

B. Determinants of the programme of work of MULPOCs

1. The programming process

19. The new terms of reference of MULPOCs, approved by the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1990 (see para. 7 above), vested MULPOCs with the following responsibilities: 18/

(a) "Designing the programme of work of the Commission at the subregional level;

(b) "Implementing such a programme within the available resources;

(c) "Being first call points for any ECA assistance to the IGOs;

(d) "Channelling to ECA headquarters whose requests which cannot be dealt with by the MULPOC because it lacks the necessary expertise."

20. In November 1993, in response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, the ECA secretariat stated the following:

> MULPOCs work in close collaboration with the IGOs existing in their area with a view to identifying a set of subregional priorities to be addressed. The programme of work of the MULPOCs takes into account not only their own delivery capacity, but also the expertise available in ECA substantive divisions and from the ECA-MRAG [see paras. 11 and 12 above]. For the 1992-1993 biennium, an attempt was made to integrate fully the programme of work of MULPOCs and that of ECA substantive divisions. This aim was not totally achieved because some activities were initiated by substantive divisions in response to requests made by member States and the IGOs prior to the adoption of the new mandate of MULPOCs. But a great deal of duplication was avoided and, for the 1994-1995 biennium, all efforts will be made to make MULPOCs solely responsible for programming the activities of ECA at the subregional level. This would require a new approach to the programming of the whole ECA secretariat.

21. The following two examples illustrate difficulties encountered currently by MULPOCs in programming and implementing their activities:

Example 1. One subregion has approximately 40 IGOs. In order to coordinate their activities, IGOs have created an Association, of which 10 main IGOs are members. They have requested the MULPOC to serve as the Association's secretariat. At the 1993 meeting of the committee of experts of the Association, difficulties encountered in the periodic updating of the directory of IGOs of the subregion were discussed; specifically the failure of some IGOs to forward the required information, and the lack of resources to enable MULPOC to conduct a sufficient number of missions. The Liaison Bulletin of IGOs was issued for the first time in 1993. Among other objectives, it is intended for use by IGOs in the identification of areas of inter-IGO cooperation and in the execution of their work programmes. 19/

Example 2. Another MULPOC serves only two IGOs and is located at the same duty station as the main IGO. In 1993, during consultations between that MULPOC and the main IGO, several impediments to the implementation of common projects were identified, including the following:

(a) Almost no involvement of the IGO during the project identification studies;

(b) Low involvement of member States, in particular of national experts at the IGO, in the feasibility studies carried out by MULPOCs;

(c) Identification studies that do not clearly follow priorities of either member States or IGO, such as those programmed by ECA headquarters in the context of the subregional activities of the Commission's substantive divisions. 20/

2. Linking national and subregional levels

22. The General Assembly, in resolution 48/25 of 29 November 1993 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, called upon United Nations agencies to make an effort "to ensure harmonization of their programmes with those of the African regional and subregional economic organizations".

> "The complexities involved in harmonizing and integrating individual country objectives with regional and subregional strategies has become more apparent with the inception of African strategies aimed at the socio-economic integration of the continent. At the same time structural and operational shortcomings of the regional commissions to respond adequately and appropriately to regional development requirements have also become more acute." 21/

23. In accordance with their 1990 terms of reference, MULPOCs are to develop "effective working relationships with the Governments, the IGOs, the UNDP offices and other international organizations with a view to harmonizing technical assistance programmes at the subregional level". 22/ In November 1993, in response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, ECA observed that:

> So far, no operational framework has been developed to integrate the regional dimension into national programming. As a consequence, ECA, including the MULPOCs, has remained largely dissociated from the whole process of follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989 and 47/199 of 22 December 1992 on operational activities for development.

Those two resolutions "reaffirm that the recipient Governments have the sole responsibility for the coordination of external assistance and the principal responsibility for its design and management". The UNDP fifth intercountry programme, which was prepared in collaboration with African Governments, IGOs and United Nations agencies, was discussed and endorsed by the third

extraordinary meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in November 1991 before its approval by the Governing Council of UNDP in May 1992.

24. Findings and recommendations set forth in the 1990 evaluation report of UNDP assistance to African intergovernmental organizations 23/ have been the basis for the formulation of the fifth UNDP intercountry programme (1992-1996). 24/ The UNDP evaluation mission observed in its report 23/ that, during the fourth programming cycle (1987-1991):

> "The respective roles of UNDP, ECA, and the specialized agencies in project formulation, implementation and monitoring were never clearly articulated. ... Some IGOs were overloaded with separate and often conflicting project proposals from specialized agencies." [The UNDP mission recommended that] "attempts should be made at the national level to link national projects to regional projects for reasons of economy and impact. This can be achieved by a more active involvement of the Resident Representatives and the outposted UNDP Regional Project officers". ... "In the present circumstances, African Governments would be well-advised to synchronize the rhythm of regional UNDP assistance with national planning or structural adjustment programmes in individual countries as far as possible. ... The relevant ministries in each country can handle this coordination exercise with the IGO concerned."
>
> In that respect, "one of the main purposes of the advisory services of ECA-MRAG in the field of economic cooperation and integration is to assist African States in creating departments of regional cooperation that would seek to establish their credibility as a source of sound thinking to development issues and to demonstrate their ability to help formulate a common approach for their respective subregions." 25/

ECA has implemented three subregional multisectoral projects of assistance to economic groupings in close coordination with other United Nations agencies; follow-up actions aimed at the implementation of programmes will be necessary.

3. Rationalization of intergovernmental organizations

25. The evaluation mission on UNDP assistance to African IGOs (see para. 24 above) found that:

> "Almost all the IGOs in Africa suffer from certain inherent institutional and administrative weaknesses which undermine the confidence and credibility they should be accorded at the national and international levels. Some of the problems stem from the proliferation of subregional economic groupings and the lack of effective coordination of their activities."

There are currently more than 200 African organizations involved in regional cooperation.

> "The proliferation of economic integration organs has often led inevitably to overlapping membership, duplication of activities, not to mention

> conflicting regulations and decisions. ... [Most] African countries are ... members of two or more groupings. Sixteen countries belong to three or more groupings." 26/

The OAU and IGOs, as well as member States, have strongly underlined the need to harmonize and coordinate subregional and regional development activities within the framework of a rationalization programme. 27/

26. In the African region, during the UNDP fourth programming cycle, 1987-1991, the main beneficiaries of regional and subregional integration projects funded by UNDP were the eight major integration IGOs. With ECA and OAU, UNDP is reviewing its regional programming in order to rationalize current initiatives and ensure greater responsiveness to changing conditions and priorities. By the end of the fifth UNDP programming cycle, 1992-1996, it is expected that there will be a significant reduction in the number of IGOs, a better harmonization of their activities and a higher degree of intra-African cooperation in the key integrative sectors identified. 28/ In May 1993, at the Fifth Consultative Meeting of the Chief Executives of OAU, ECA and AfDB, the Executive Secretary of ECA stressed that "the building of the Pan-African Economic Community will initially have to be done by strengthening subregional economic communities" (see also para. 17 above). After the 1993 OAU Cairo Summit, the OAU/ECA/AfDB joint secretariat was revived with a closer collaboration from the UNDP/Regional Bureau for Africa. At the end of 1993, the joint secretariat agreed that a coherent programme of work for the African Economic Community (AEC) must be designed as soon as the Abuja Treaty enters into force. The existing regional economic communities (RECs) constitute the foundation upon which the AEC is to be built, as specified in the Abuja Treaty; the joint secretariat observed that the RECs are at various levels of development, and that its assistance to them will differ from one REC to another. In connection with the above, the OAU secretariat, ECA and the UNDP Regional Liaison Office in Addis Ababa are preparing a joint programme to be considered for funding by UNDP. 29/

27. At ECA the responsibilities of the new division, entitled Trade, Economic Cooperation and Integration, of which MULPOCs are part, are defined in connection with the main goal of the Commission to assist member States in implementing the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (see para. 15 above). In response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, the ECA secretariat stated, in November 1993, that a comprehensive analysis of the requests for assistance from IGOs to ECA has never been undertaken. In relation to the rationalization and harmonization of the 30 ECA-sponsored institutions which have support functions for regional integration and development, the Commission will submit a report with recommendations to the 1994 session of the ECA Conference of Ministers.

4. Monitoring of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

28. In the context of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, UNDP funded a project for the monitoring and appraisal of the Programme, with ECA as executing agency. The evaluation of that project, conducted in 1992, concluded that, 30/

"Even with 'informal support' ... from other ECA departments, the United Nations system and inter-agency task forces, [the project] is clearly ... understaffed", with only two professionals and two secretaries. "Monitoring policy developments, economic trends and the [Programme of Action] implementation experiences in 51 countries is a mammoth task requiring a more complex structure and a greater number of personnel than [available]."

29. The successor to the Programme of Action, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of African in the 1990s, was adopted in 1991. 31/ The UNDP project document on support for monitoring the implementation of the New Agenda states that "ECA has ... an established framework for coordinating the New Agenda monitoring activities through the MULPOCs and their associated national focal points". 32/ In response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, the ECA secretariat stated, in November 1993, that:

At the subregional level, the MULPOCs, in collaboration with subregional IGOs, will be expected to handle the preparation of the progress report on the achievements of various subregions using the inputs of national focal points. At the level of the ECA, the secretariat of the Inter-Agency Task Force monitoring the implementation of the New Agenda, supported by the substantive divisions, will handle the compilation of a regional progress report.

C. Resources available to MULPOCs

1. Level of staffing

30. A comparison of staffing levels between January 1990 and January 1993 shows an increase of regular budget posts and a decrease of extrabudgetary posts. Taking all sources of funds into account, there were 28 Professional and 35 General Service staff assigned to MULPOCs in 1990, and there were 28 Professional staff - including two project staff outposted from Addis Ababa - and 38 General Service staff assigned to MULPOCs in 1993. 33/ The decrease in extrabudgetary posts has been significant, from eight Professionals in 1990 to none in 1993, and from 14 supporting staff in 1990 to 2 in 1993.

(a) It should be noted that:

(i) Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/185 C of 20 December 1991 five new Professional posts were established for the biennium 1992-1993 to strengthen the MULPOCs; those posts remained vacant owing to the treatment of vacancy procedures and the recruitment freeze;

(ii) Twenty Professional posts were encumbered in 1993, five of which were Administrative/Finance Officer (L-2/3) posts. Consequently, there was an average of only three Professional posts in substantive areas for each MULPOC;

(iii) Eleven General Service posts encumbered by MULPOC staff were on loan from other units of the Commission; 15 General Service posts were financed from temporary assistance funds;

(iv) There has been a strengthening of the MULPOCs through a movement of P-5 and P-4 posts to the field, and a corresponding movement of P-3 and P-2/1 posts to Addis Ababa headquarters;

(b) Member States have always stated their readiness to provide technical support to MULPOCs through the secondment of their civil servants on a short-term basis (see para. 18 above); but on only two occasions has that cooperation materialized. This could not be repeated because MULPOCs lack extrabudgetary resources to meet the cost of travel of staff seconded by their Governments.

2. Expertise of MULPOC staff

31. The review team, appointed in 1989 to review the functioning of the MULPOCs, had recommended that provision should be made for at least one Professional or L-level expert to cover each of the priorities established by Member States. 34/ This was to create a minimum "core staff" with the requisite expertise. The review team's assessment was that 42 Professionals or L-level expert staff were required in 18 different fields of expertise for the five MULPOCs.

32. In its 1992 report on MULPOCs, ECA observed that the "evaluation of MULPOC resource requirements remains valid". 35/ The report describes the areas of specialization of the staff on board, and the specializations assigned to vacant newly established posts. Up to 1991 the expertise available in MULPOCs had been mostly that of general economists, who were in charge of most sectors. By 1992, however, approximately half of the areas of specialization identified by the 1990 review team had been filled.

33. The report of the Board of Auditors for the 1990-1991 biennium states that "the programme outputs of MULPOCs were insufficient in respect of quantity as well as quality". 36/ The auditors stated that reports by MULPOCs were often elaborations of facts and data already available to the member States of the subregion concerned. In response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, in November 1993, the ECA secretariat acknowledged that:

> The outputs of MULPOCs used to be of a general nature and stated that action had, however, been taken to make them more action-oriented and that their operational character had been enhanced owing to the increasing diversification of technical expertise becoming available in the MULPOCs.

34. Another method of providing MULPOCs with specialists is through the temporary assignment of Regional Advisers who have the appropriate specialization to the MULPOC in need of that specialization. In response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, the ECA secretariat stated, in November 1993, that:

It is actively considering decentralizing the work of MRAG to the MULPOCs; also, following the decentralization exercise at United Nations Headquarters, the 12 new posts of Regional Advisers in different disciplines would enable MRAG to respond more effectively to the different priority programmes of the five MULPOCs. The modalities of coordination in the secretariat of ECA, with the coordinator of ECA-MRAG and the division supervising the MULPOCs would have to be worked out.

35. Further decentralization of specialists could occur by their reassignment from the ECA substantive divisions to MULPOCs. In the 1992 ECA report on MULPOCs, 37/ it was proposed that:

"The ECA substantive divisions will transfer to the MULPOCs the programming of their activities at the subregional level; ... [the divisions] will participate in the programming exercise and ... in the substantive supervision of the work of the MULPOCs. [In restructuring the ECA secretariat,] efforts will be made to physically relocate staff members of the substantive divisions to the MULPOC headquarters".

3. Non-staff resources of MULPOCs

36. The 1990 review team on MULPOCs reported that "the resources made available to the MULPOCs, both human and financial, have been grossly inadequate, [and that it constituted] the single most important obstacle in the fulfilment of the mandate". 38/

37. Based on estimates made by the review team on what would constitute an adequate level of non-staff resources for MULPOCs, ECA estimated that the amount of resources required for 1992-1993 would have been $3,741,200. 39/ The regular budget for 1992-1993 provided an amount of $1,173,700. For the biennium 1994-1995, appropriations in the amount of $1,338,100 have been approved for the five MULPOC offices. Those appropriations do not include provisions for established posts, consultants and experts and travel costs.

38. In 1992, extrabudgetary resources - mostly earmarked contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD) - were $79,818 for the five MULPOCs.

4. Resources for projects

39. In response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, in November 1993, the ECA secretariat stated that:

UNDP stopped its financial support to MULPOCs in January 1983, arguing that the latter are not intergovernmental bodies distinct from the ECA secretariat. However, MULPOCs are still involved in the implementation of UNDP-funded projects of IGOs executed by ECA.

40. The 1990 evaluation report on the assistance of UNDP to African IGOs stated that: 40/

"The resources allocated to the subregional and regional integration institutions during the Fourth Programme Cycle were far from adequate as regards the requests submitted by the IGOs and were also thinly spread throughout the various subregions for any appreciable impact"; [it estimated that] "a resource level of $70 million should be the IPF for the Fifth Cycle in favour of the integration IGOs".

In the 1992 report on MULPOCs, 41/ ECA stated that UNDP was not expecting a new inflow of resources to support the projects of IGOs before 1995, at the earliest, and that, in the meantime, alternative sources of extrabudgetary funds would be actively sought.

41. The UNDP Assistant Administrator stated at the 1993 ECA Conference of Ministers that, 42/ since 1987, the UNDP/Regional Bureau for Africa had approved a total of $54.2 million towards projects in support of regional integration; the ECA executed 15.4 per cent - $8.3 million - of the programmes of the subregional IGOs. Referring to the UNDP intercountry programme for Africa, she announced that, for the rest of the Fifth Cycle (1992-1996), the total programme resources for regional programmes amounted to only $10 million. For the future, she stressed that intercountry programme resources would depend on well-established criteria, such as the specific development impact of the programme and the commitment of the participating countries, as demonstrated by their willingness to co-finance from national indicative planning figures and government sources.

42. Under their 1990 terms of reference, MULPOCs provide Member States and IGOs with short-term advisory services in development planning and assist in the translation of those plans into multinational and multisectoral programmes and projects, including the identification and formulation of programmes and projects for execution by them or, at their request, by the MULPOC itself. In a 1993 report, 43/ one MULPOC observed that, of the three main stages prior to the execution of a project - that is (i) project identification, (ii) preliminary studies, and (iii) feasibility study - typically only the first stage can be fully covered by the regular budget. For the second and third stages, the MULPOC relies on extrabudgetary resources, either UNTFAD or UNDP. Finally, the report states that, owing to insufficient resources in the regular budget, studies for project identification cannot always be as thorough as desirable to convince donors approached by ECA. 44/

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATION ON THE PAN-AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

A. UNDP assessment in 1992

43. Established by resolutions 359 (XIV) and 366 (XIV) of 27 March 1979 adopted by the Conference of Ministers of ECA, the Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS) has been operating at ECA since 1980, with the overall objective of promoting development information management in the Africa region, and funded from extrabudgetary sources. From 1980 to 1992 the major donor to PADIS was UNDP. In 1992, UNDP conducted a final evaluation report of the PADIS project 45/ for the Fourth Programme Cycle, 1987-1991. The observations and

findings of the evaluation mission pertinent to the main objectives and activities of the project are summarized below.

(a) Substantial and measurable progress was made towards achievement of PADIS immediate objectives in the fourth year of the project:

(i) Inputs are now coming in regularly from nearly 20 national participating centres, as well as from one subregional and several institutional participating centres; the only aspect of the immediate objective which has encountered problems is the establishment and strengthening of subregional centres (para. 34.I);

(ii) There is a constant growth in the quantity and variety of information available through the project. Major efforts have been made to improve the quality of materials entered in the databases. The project has taken advantage of innovations in information technology to increase the availability of its information resource base;

(iii) PADIS has taken the lead in the region with the introduction and promotion of the use of compatible norms and standards by participating centres; some universities and institutions of higher learning in Africa have incorporated PADIS methodologies in their curricula (para. 34.IV);

(b) The project has made significant progress towards the attainment of its development objective. At the time of the evaluation, 38 (of 50) African countries had named their national participating centres in the PADIS network, as compared to 9 countries at the start of the project, and 43 institutional centres were in the network. Within those centres, the project is directed at government planners and decision makers, and researchers. The identified beneficiaries were being assisted to develop their information management capabilities through the provision of advisory services, training programmes and a variety of tools, methods and standards (paras. 36-39);

(c) The need for and usefulness of the activities carried out under this project were recognized by the African Member States. However:

(i) Given the resource base of the project, the immediate objectives were found to be over-ambitious in terms of geographical coverage, span of attention and scope of activities (para. 43);

(ii) The persistent difficulties in knowing the actual and potential users and their respective needs, as well as the wide variety of requests for training and advisory services which emanated from the member States, led to a loosely defined design of the project in those respects (para. 44);

(iii) Given the workload as defined in the project document and additional functions within ECA, the project was understaffed. That situation was aggravated by the high turnover of staff and the slow recruitment procedures of the executing agency (para. 46);

(iv) The level of development and sophistication of the national centres differs widely. The same holds true for the degree of support by national Governments and the importance they attach to information-related issues (para. 49).

UNDP support to PADIS for the North African subregion was provided under a different project; 46/ the project final evaluation, conducted also in 1992, drew similar conclusions regarding the achievement of objectives.

B. Work programme preparation

44. On a regular basis PADIS conducts studies of user needs (1988, 1990 and 1992) and presents the results to intergovernmental bodies, which consider them and make recommendations for the forthcoming work programme. Following the UNDP Evaluation of 1990, PADIS prepared a major study in 1991 on information systems in Africa; 47/ the study was sent to all Member States for comment and presented to the Regional Technical committee of PADIS. After analysis of the comments made by the various sources, PADIS concluded that:

> "Emphasis in the cycle 1992-1996 will be on networking, both in the substantive as well as the technological sense, and in the diversification of information products; that present areas of activity will be continued, with particular attention to improvement of the marketing of PADIS and of its training programme."

The project document for the funding of PADIS by the European Community for the period 1992-1996, indicates that PADIS will make special efforts to reach the private sector. 48/

45. At the 1993 meeting of its Regional Technical Committee, PADIS was congratulated by the participants for its substantial accomplishments during the period since the last meeting despite major resource limitations. In the general debate, the meeting suggested that users pay for information services. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) urged further that: 49/

> "ECA work closely together with OAU and UNDP on an integrated approach to developing information systems and requested UNDP to involve ECA/PADIS in its global Sustainable Development Network (SDN). PADIS was also [urged] to do more in the area of publishing training materials, using desktop publishing techniques and operating on cost recovery principles."

C. Resources available to information systems development and PADIS

46. The activities of ECA in information systems development began in 1980 with extrabudgetary projects. They have been part of the medium-term plan for the Economic Commission for Africa since the 1984-1989 plan (as revised in 1984), and have been included in the programme budget for ECA since 1986, although resources have never been provided from the regular budget. The 1992-1993 programme budget for ECA contains activities on information systems development in subprogramme 1, but without any provision of regular budget resources.

Through March 1992, PADIS staff were funded from extrabudgetary sources, including UNDP (six Professional staff, six General Services staff) and IDRC (one staff member). In March 1992, the UNDP staffing came to an end. Since then, on a month-to-month basis, PADIS staff have been covered from several sources of grants and funds. 50/

47. The ECA Conference of Ministers, in resolution 732 (XXVII) of 22 April 1992, requested UNDP to consider the funding of the activities of PADIS under its Fifth Regional Programming Cycle for Africa (1992-1996) commensurate with its expansion of operational activities. The Conference of Ministers also requested the Executive Secretary to intensify his efforts to fund core posts for PADIS from the regular budget. Since 1987, the ECA Conference of Ministers had passed four resolutions requesting the Executive Secretary to make efforts to have the information systems development funded from the regular budget of the United Nations - 600 (XXII) of 24 April 1987, 658 (XXIV) of 7 April 1989, 679 (XXV) of May 1990 and 716 (XXVI) of 12 May 1991. In 1992 the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1992/51 of 31 July 1992 entitled Strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face Africa's development challenges in the 1990s, in which, among other things, the Council requested the Executive Secretary to "ensure that [the Commission's] activities are fully grounded in sound data and information systems, through the strengthening of the Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS), which should be provided with adequate financial resources". For UNDP intercountry programme resources, see paragraph 41 above. The Conference of Ministers in resolution 766 (XXVIII) of 4 May 1993 noted "with concern the decreasing availability of extrabudgetary resources for implementation and utilization of development information systems and technology"; it further noted "the precarious financial situation of PADIS and the need to end its reliance on extrabudgetary sources of funding". The Conference of Ministers urged Member States to give priority to information systems development in the use of their UNDP country IPFs and, among other measures, requested the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to ensure the provision of four Professional and two local-level posts, as well as resources to permit the delivery of activities with its 1994-1995 programme budget.

48. In 1993, the Economic and Social Council, by resolution 1993/67 of 30 July 1993, requested "the General Assembly to ensure ... adequate staffing and resources to permit the delivery of activities to the subprogramme of the Commission on information systems development, beginning with the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995". By decision 48/453, the General Assembly endorsed Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/67. Regarding the programme budget implications of this decision, the Secretary-General stated that the overall resources under sections 15 and 20 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 would be adequate to carry out the activities programmed for the next biennium; that it is also expected that the internal organizational restructuring of ECA would lead to further strengthening of the subprogramme information systems development; and that a review of future arrangements for PADIS would be undertaken in the course of 1994 and would be submitted to the ECA Conference of Ministers for its consideration. 51/

49. In response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, in November 1993, the ECA secretariat stated that:

> The Executive Secretary of ECA intends to make information systems development part of the regular programme of ECA. The required core posts will be provided for from the regular budget, while extrabudgetary funds will be sought for activities and projects.

At the Sixth Meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS in April 1993, 52/

> "On the topic of cost recovery, the secretariat reported that some users were already paying for advisory services and training, and that others were attempting to find ways to use UNDP national IPFs to finance information projects which would require technical assistance from regional sources ... UNDP expressed its willingness to assist ECA in locating other donors".

Recently, three new grants have been received, one from the International Development Research Centre in Abidjan (IDRC), one from the Government of the Netherlands and one from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The last two are new donors to the programme. Projects are pending with the European Community and the Governments of Italy and Japan, as well as with the Islamic and African Development Banks.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Multinational Programming and Operational Centres

50. Programmes of MULPOCs: CPC recommended that the Secretary-General should identify those activities relating to economic cooperation and integration that could be reoriented and focused wholly on subregional objectives and priorities, as set out by economic subregional groupings, and should submit appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. ECA, through restructuring of its substantive divisions and the adoption of new terms of reference of the MULPOCs, has established the conditions under which the CPC recommendation could be realized (see paras. 15, 19 above). However:

(a) It should be noted that the current efforts to rationalize the activities of numerous subregional economic groupings, in most cases, have not borne fruit yet; not all groupings are in a position to set out clear objectives and priorities for their subregion (see paras. 21, 25-26 above).

(b) Currently, MULPOCs find it difficult to complete all the studies required for project formulation because of lack of regular budget resources. Also, a number of projects are not executed owing to the sharp decrease of extrabudgetary funding of regional programmes. UNDP is not expecting a new inflow of resources to support those projects before 1995, at the earliest (see paras. 40-42 above).

(c) Focusing on priorities set out by economic subregional groupings does not necessarily mean that dedicated subregional ECA institutions, such as MULPOCs, are the only structure to implement a programme of work derived from those priorities. Since 1991, the ECA-MRAG, a central advisory group under the

direct supervision of the Executive Secretary, has played a much appreciated role in support of subregional intergovernmental organizations (IGOs); such a group offers the flexibility required to answer a wide range of needs (see paras. 11-12, 24, 34 above).

(d) Some aspects of subregional cooperation urgently require better coordination and monitoring, namely (i) to harmonize and coordinate subregional and regional development activities; (ii) to integrate individual country objectives with regional and subregional strategies; (iii) to monitor more closely the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (see paras. 17, 22-24, 28-29 above).

51. Resources of MULPOCs: CPC further recommended that, in reviewing the resource requirements of MULPOCs at its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly should fully reflect the recommendations of the evaluation report (E/AC.51/1991/3), as well as other relevant reports adopted by it and, in the light of that review, the requisite resources should be provided to the MULPOCs for the efficient fulfilment of their mandate relating to subregional economic cooperation and integration in Africa. In agreement with that recommendation, the General Assembly supported the efforts of ECA to strengthen MULPOCs. Those efforts were thwarted to some extent by the decrease in recent years of extrabudgetary resources, and by the scarcity of staff in areas of critical importance to MULPOCs. Measured against the level of resources mentioned in the in-depth evaluation report and other relevant reports, no meaningful increase of resources has been achieved (see paras. 7, 9, 30-32 above). In particular the level of non-staff resources is considered to be inadequate and is thus causing implementation difficulties (see paras. 21, 30 (ii), 36-38, 42 above). ECA is actively considering the decentralization of regional advisers to MULPOCs, as well as the relocation of staff of substantive divisions to them (see paras. 34-35 above).

52. It is recommended that:

Recommendation 1, MULPOCs: Priorities of each Centre

In the short term, each MULPOC should focus its activities on the rationalization of subregional groupings and their programmes, with due attention to country objectives, as well as regional strategies, taking into account the first phase of the implementation of the Abuja Treaty. Participation in the regional network set up by ECA for monitoring the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s should be the second highest priority.

Recommendation 2, Overall priorities in ECA for subregional activities

In time of budgetary restraint, and pending the rationalization of subregional programmes, resources available should be mobilized only to support projects of the highest integration impact; and, of those projects, those which are most likely to be granted all the funds required for their implementation. ECA should continue to rely on temporary outposting of headquarters staff to a subregion, and on the activities of ECA-MRAG rather

than attempt to provide all MULPOCs at the same time with the critical mass of resources required.

Recommendation 3, MULPOCs: Redeployment within the ECA 1994-1995 budget

The allocation of resources to the MULPOCs for the biennium 1994-1995 should be revised in the course of the biennium, and existing resources at ECA redeployed to match requirements, with due attention to non-staff resources.

B. Pan-African Development Information System

53. Resources of PADIS: CPC had recommended that UNDP should provide adequate resources to allow PADIS to become fully operational. UNDP support of PADIS came to an end in 1992 (see para. 46 above). The ECA Conference of Ministers is concerned by the precarious financial situation of PADIS and, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1993/67, requested the General Assembly to ensure the provision of adequate staffing and resources for ECA's information systems development, beginning with the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 (see paras. 47-48 above). PADIS has made significant progress towards achievement of its objectives (see para. 43 above), and ECA is trying to diversify the PADIS donor base, as well as to increase cost recovery revenues (see para. 49 above). A review for future arrangements for PADIS will be submitted to the ECA Conference of Ministers at its session in May 1994. Should it be necessary, the Secretary-General would revert to this question following the outcome of the review.

C. Specialized intergovernmental review

54. Recommendation 4, Specialized intergovernmental review

The present report should be submitted to the ECA Conference of Ministers for review and action as appropriate.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/37/38), para. 362.

2/ Ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/46/16), paras. 432-439.

3/ A/46/651, annex.

4/ General Assembly resolution 48/214, annex.

5/ A/C.5/47/88, paras. 58-63.

6/ A/C.5/45/57, paras. 19, 21 and 22.

7/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/45/7), paras. 49-50.

8/ A/C.5/47/53, para. 28.

9/ A/48/7, para. V.11.

10/ E/ECA/CM.18/19, paras. 1, 4, 5 and 8; Preliminary Evaluation of ECA's Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group (ECA-MRAG) (ECA/PPCO/EV/003, December 1992), para. 7.

11/ Ibid., paras. 12 and 21.

12/ E/ECA/CM.18/4, Introduction and sects. I.B, II.D.1 and III.B.2.

13/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/47/16) (Part II)), para. 168.

14/ Memorandum of the Executive Secretary of ECA dated 29 October 1992, pp. 1 and 2; with attached Proposed New Organizational Structure, ECA, 26 October 1992, pp. 1, 2 and 12.

15/ A/C.5/47/88, para. 63.

16/ E/ECA/CM.19/27, and resolutions 743 (XXVIII), para. 6, and 745 (XXVIII), preamble, of 4 May 1993.

17/ "Report of the Review Team on the Structure, Organization and Operations of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa" (E/ECA/CM.16/13), paras. 30-35.

18/ Report on ECA MULPOCs, draft report prepared by ECA for the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly (5 November 1992), para. 9.

19/ Report of the sixth meeting of the Association of West African IGOs (ECA/MULPOC/NIA/IGOs/92/19, March 1993), paras. 2, 34, 37, 38 and 43.

20/ Réunion de concertation BDEGL-SEP/CEPGL-MULPOC, ECA/GSY/MULPOC (July 1993), sects. 3, (i) and (ii).

21/ ECA, Preliminary Evaluation of ECA-MRAG, op. cit., para. 23.

22/ ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 702 (XXV), of 19 May 1990, annex, para. 8 (e).

23/ UNDP, "Report of an Evaluation of UNDP's Assistance to African Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs)", (September 29-21 November 1990), paras. 57, 104, 105; and, in para. 25 of the text above, paras. 80 and 121.

24/ UNDP, "Regional Economic Integration, Annual Report of the Administrator for 1992" (DP/1993/14), paras. 4-9.

25/ ECA, "Preliminary Evaluation of ECA-MRAG" (1992), op. cit., para. 11.

26/ UNCTAD, Regional Integration Issues in Africa (TD/B/39(2)/11), para. 85.

27/ "Report of an Evaluation of UNDP's Assistance to African Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs)", op. cit., para. 121.

28/ DP/1993/14., op. cit., paras. 3, 11, 14 and 15; "The role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s" (DP/1993/17), para. 17.

29/ Report of the consultative meeting, held in December 1993 (OAU/ECA/AfDB Joint Secretariat), paras. 10 and 13.

30/ UNDP evaluation of project RAF/88/127 (November 1992), para. 33.

31/ General Assembly resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991, annex.

32/ UNDP project document RAF/93/004/A/01/51 (July 1993), p. 13.

33/ A/C.5/45/57, para. 14; ECA staffing table. Memorandum of the Executive Secretary of ECA (29 October 1992), op. cit.

34/ E/ECA/CM.16/13, op. cit., pp. 37-38, table 3.

35/ Report on ECA MULPOCs (1992), para. 11 and annex IV.

36/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/47/5), vol. I and Corr.1, para. 140 (c).

37/ Report on ECA MULPOCs, op. cit., para. 10.

38/ E/ECA/CM.16/13, op. cit., para. 101 and table 2.

39/ Ibid., para. 98; Report on ECA MULPOCs, op. cit., table IV and annex IV.

40/ "Evaluation of UNDP's assistance to African IGOs", op. cit., executive summary (para. 5) and para. 137.

41/ Report on ECA MULPOCs, op. cit., para. 14.

42/ E/ECA/CM.19/27, paras. 151-153.

43/ Réunion de concertation, op. cit., pp. 1 and 2.

44/ Ibid., p. 13.

45/ PADIS, Phase III, UNDP project RAF/86/053, Terminal Report (June 1992).

46/ RAB/88/012.

47/ Adaptation of PADIS to Changing Needs (ECA/PADIS, RTC/7, October 1991), paras. 5, 8 and 12.

48/ ECA, "Projet de document en vue d'un financement par la CEE, 1992-1996", paras. 61-63.

49/ ECA/PADIS/RTC/93/7, 23 April 1993, para. 8.

50/ ECA Briefing note on PADIS, op. cit.

51/ A/C.5/48/53, paras. 4 and 5.

52/ ECA/PADIS/RTC/93/7, op. cit., paras. 9 and 11.